

Blockades & Protests: GAC update (Feb. 19)

From: "Beaulieu, Sebastien -NGA" <sebastien.beaulieu@international.gc.ca>
To: *USS-DMA Advisors/Conseillers <d-uss-dmaadvisors@international.gc.ca>, *DMT-Policy/Politiques <d-dmt-policy@international.gc.ca>, *MINT-Dept Unit/Unité ministérielle <d-mint-dept-unit@international.gc.ca>, *MINA-Dept Unit/Unité ministérielle <d-mina-dept-unit@international.gc.ca>, "McCardell, Sandra -EGM" <sandra.mccardell@international.gc.ca>, "Thoppil, Paul -OGM" <paul.thoppil@international.gc.ca>, "Khan, Tarik -WFD" <tarik.khan@international.gc.ca>, "Hulan, Heidi -IFM" <heidi.hulan@international.gc.ca>, "Benjamin, Martin -IND" <martin.benjamin@international.gc.ca>, "Wilshaw, Sara -BFM" <sara.wilshaw@international.gc.ca>, "McInnis, Crista -BFM" <crista.mcinnis@international.gc.ca>, "Hutchison, David -BPD" <david.hutchison@international.gc.ca>, "Christie, Bruce -TFM" <bruce.christie@international.gc.ca>, "Alexander, Arun -TFMA" <arun.alexander@international.gc.ca>, "Renart, Ana -TND" <ana.renart@international.gc.ca>, "Gosselin, Catherine -TNP" <catherine.gosselin@international.gc.ca>, "Levesque, Stéphane -LCM" <stephane.levesque@international.gc.ca>, "Mojsej, Charles -LCD" <charles.mojsej@international.gc.ca>, "Loken, Martin -WSHDC -GR" <martin.loken@international.gc.ca>, "Lorre, Anne-Tamara -WSHDC -GR" <anne-tamara.lorre@international.gc.ca>, "Baird, Katherine -WSHDC -DHOM/CDMA" <katherine.baird@international.gc.ca>, "McIntyre, Graeme -WSHDC -GR" <graeme.mcintyre@international.gc.ca>, "Bélanger, Jérôme -WSHDC -GR" <jerome.belanger@international.gc.ca>, "Grant, Heather -WSHDC -WS" <heather.grant@international.gc.ca>, "Barratt, Adam -WSHDC -WS" <adam.barratt@international.gc.ca>, "Layton, John -WSHDC -TD" <john.layton@international.gc.ca>, "Bourély, Nadia -WSHDC -TD" <nadia.bourelly@international.gc.ca>, "Kane, Lee -WSHDC -TD" <lee.kane@international.gc.ca>, "Nizman, Sara -LCF" <sara.nizman@international.gc.ca>, "Tan, Diana -WSHDC -PA" <diana.tan@international.gc.ca>, "Perkins, Kate -WSHDC -PA" <kate.perkins@international.gc.ca>, "Ballard, Julie -WSHDC -WS" <julie.ballard@international.gc.ca>, "Lambo, Pam -WSHDC -WS -PA" <pam.lambo@international.gc.ca>, "Dobner, Gallit -IOL" <gallit.dobner@international.gc.ca>, "Raja, Adnan -IOL" <adnan.raja@international.gc.ca>, "Tan, Diana -WSHDC -PA" <diana.tan@international.gc.ca>, "Thissen, Sonya -NMD" <sonya.thissen@international.gc.ca>, "Drew-Watt, Julia -NMX -NMO" <julia.drew-watt@international.gc.ca>, "Pena, Patricia -POD" <patricia.pena@international.gc.ca>, "Cohen, Sara -NLD" <sara.cohen@international.gc.ca>, "Cesaratto, Sylvia -NDD" <sylvia.cesaratto@international.gc.ca>, "Cheung-Gertler, Jasmin -IRZ" <jasmin.cheung-gertler@international.gc.ca>, "McDonald, Lynn -PED" <lynn.mcdonald@international.gc.ca>, "Geislerova, Marketa -IOL" <marketa.geislerova@international.gc.ca>, "Godin, Catherine -IOD" <catherine.godin@international.gc.ca>, "Dobner, Gallit -IOL" <gallit.dobner@international.gc.ca>, "Raja, Adnan -IOL" <adnan.raja@international.gc.ca>
Cc: "Grant, Michael -NGM" <michael.grant@international.gc.ca>, "Vanderloo, Caroline -NGM" <caroline.vanderloo@international.gc.ca>, "Walsh, Eric -NGD" <eric.walsh@international.gc.ca>, "Schmidt, Kelly -NGD"

<kelly.schmidt@international.gc.ca>, "Coulombe, Evelyne -NGB"
 <evelyne.coulombe@international.gc.ca>, "Parsons, Alanna -NGB"
 <alanna.parsons@international.gc.ca>, "Denter, Christian -NGB"
 <christian.denter@international.gc.ca>, "Ramcharan, Lisette -NGQ"
 <lisette.ramcharan@international.gc.ca>, "Raiche, Vincent -NGQ"
 <vincent.raiche@international.gc.ca>, "Dixon, Lucas -NGQ"
 <lucas.dixon@international.gc.ca>, "Clark, Graeme -MXICO -HOM/CDM"
 <graeme.clark@international.gc.ca>, "Hemingway, Shauna -MXICO -DHOM/CDMA"
 <shauna.hemingway@international.gc.ca>, "Levasseur-Rivard, Sacha -NGI"
 <sacha.levasseur-rivard@international.gc.ca>, "Kent, Deirdre -OSLO -HOM/CDM"
 <deirdre.kent@international.gc.ca>, "Horler, Michael -OSLO -GR"
 <michael.horler@international.gc.ca>, "LaTorre, Jason -STKHM -HOM/CDM"
 <jason.latorre@international.gc.ca>, "Lau, Meghan -STKHM -GR"
 <meghan.lau@international.gc.ca>, "Golberg, Elissa -ROME -HOM/CDM"
 <elissa.golberg@international.gc.ca>, "Perlain, Carmen -ROME -GR"
 <carmen.perlain@international.gc.ca>, "Lemay, Joanne -WLGTN -HOM/CDM"
 <joanne.lemay@international.gc.ca>, "Wright, Lorenz -WLGTN -GR"
 <lorenz.wright@international.gc.ca>, "Glauser, Mark -CNBRA -HOM/CDM"
 <mark.glauser@international.gc.ca>, "Guay, Karolina -SSAL -HOM"
 <karolina.guay@international.gc.ca>, *NGA <d-gga@international.gc.ca>, *US-
 HOM/CDM <d-us-hom-cdm@international.gc.ca>, *North America FPDS Managers
 <d-northamericafpdsmanagers@international.gc.ca>, *North America-STC <d-
 northamerica-stc@international.gc.ca>

Date: Sat, 19 Feb 2022 20:27:36 +0000

Attachments: Trucker Protest Rollup 2 (Feb 18).docx (30.5 kB); Truckers protest international roll-up Feb 19.docx (41.66 kB)

Here is the blockades GAC update of Sat. Feb. 19
 (DLUs please pass on to MINOs.)

Approved: NGM/M.Grant

S.

1. Canada-US Engagement:

- On February 18, CHCGO spoke with the Lieutenant Governor of Missouri, whose Governor was one of the signatories of the letter to PM/POTUS. CHCGO relayed some of Canada's key messages on the border & supply chains, and the LG only comment was "this too shall pass."

2. US Political Reactions to Canadian Measures: Our U.S. network continues to receive calls and letters. The recurring theme to these calls is concern over the *Emergencies Act* being invoked. Some described the situation as horrifying and a violation of human rights against Canadian citizens, while others indicated that they would no longer visit Canada or would look elsewhere for their business needs as they fear that business transactions might be frozen with no warning under the *Emergencies Act*.

3. U.S. Senator Ted Cruz amplifies fake news of death of a protester: No protester was killed in the ongoing Ottawa police operation. OPP and Ottawa Police

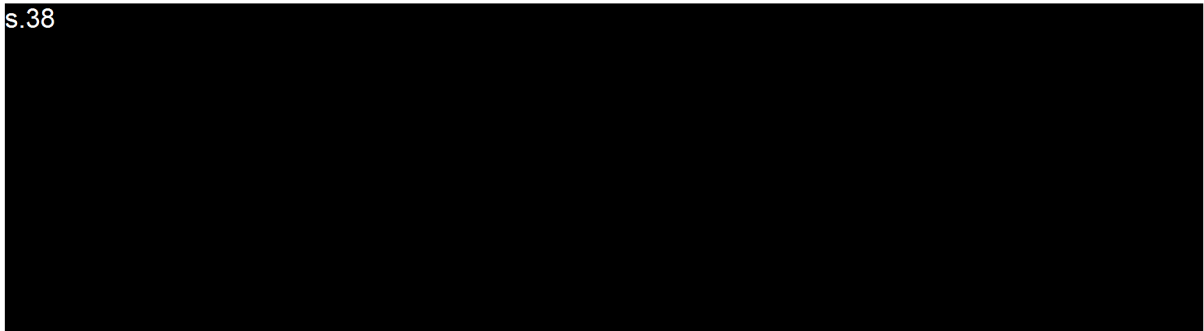
engaged in setting the record straight on social media. WSHDC also working to set the record straight.

4. **A House Democrat questions Facebook role in “Freedom Convoy” online virality (CBC News):** Representative Carolyn Maloney (D-NY-12), Chair of the House Committee on Oversight and Reform, sent a letter to Facebook’s CEO Mark Zuckerberg asking nine questions about the extent to which fake accounts from abroad helped “Freedom Convoy” organizers spread the word around the world. The letter expressed alarm over reports that Facebook had discovered that some groups promoting the convoys had been created by fake user profiles, which were set up in content farms in Vietnam, Bangladesh and Romania. The questions include, how many fake accounts Facebook identified related to the “Freedom Convoy”; when it determined they were fake; how many people saw that content; what country it originated from; what countries it was spread in; and how much money Facebook made from associated ads. Full article below.

International copycat actions and reactions

5. **Chicago (Feb.18):** On Feb. 18, a lone protester with a Canadian flag and a sign was walking around the mission’s building’s perimeter today. She indicated to building security that she was not affiliated with any group. On Feb. 15, a group of four protesters assembled outside of the mission’s tower and sought access to the chancery. They were refused by building security and dispersed shortly afterwards. They were there specifically in support of a Canadian pastor who was detained after speaking at Coutts. To date CHCGO has received approximately 15 voicemails and messages in support of protesters and critical of the PM & GoC, including of recent government actions. Some have been insulting/derogatory to the PM & that we should “pack our bags.”

s.38



7. **Social Media:** The U.S. alt-right rhetoric continues. One example of a U.S. activist with 3M+ followers.

Prepared by NGA/Marc-André Pharand

With input from WSHDC/PA; IOL & US/Global mission network

Reviewed: NGA/S.Beaulieu

Approved: NGM/M.Grant

U.S. Media coverage (abbreviated, full article attached)

Massive police operation begins to reclaim Ottawa

Politico Pro, Andy Blatchford, February 18 2022

Police pressed systematically into protester-held territory through the day Friday, arresting dozens of people and towing some of the big rigs. The offensive came four days after Prime Minister Justin Trudeau gave authorities unprecedented powers by invoking the federal Emergencies Act for the first time ever. The operation was carried out by officers with municipal, provincial and federal police forces. Armored vehicles, police horses, drones, tear gas guns and officers on rooftops all supported the advance.

Police close in on Ottawa 'Freedom Convoy'

Washington Post, Miriam Berger, Maite Fernández Simon and Amanda Coletta, 18 February 2022

Columns of police wearing reflective vests and jackets, tramping through inches of snow in the bitter cold, closed in Friday on protestors whose parked big rigs have brought Canada's capital to a standstill for weeks.

Police move in on Ottawa protests and begin making arrests.

New York Times, Dan Bilefsky, Sarah Maslin Nir, Natalie Kitroeff and Ian Austen 18 February 2022

Twenty-two days after a trucker convoy rumbled into the nation's capital to protest pandemic restrictions, hundreds of police in downtown Ottawa moved in to arrest protesters Friday morning, hoping to end weeks of gridlock that have roiled the city, infuriated local residents and shaken the country.

Ottawa Police Begin Towing Freedom Convoy Trucks From Protest Site

Wall Street Journal, Paul Vieira and Kim Mackrael, 18 February 2022

Police in Ottawa began towing heavy-duty trucks while dozens of officers moved in formation to make more arrests as they ramp up efforts to bring an end to a 22-day demonstration against Covid-19 vaccine mandates that has paralyzed the capital's downtown.

An Earlier Trek to Ottawa Had a Different Tone but Still Captured the Nation

New York Times, Ian Austen, Feb. 19, 2022

Historical perspective on the major protests that have shaken Canada's history and Ottawa in particular, including the story of about 1,000 men attempting to reach Ottawa to reform relief programs deep in the Great Depression. Most didn't make it but they eventually achieved their aims.

International coverage (abbreviated)

Canada border blockades, protests 'nothing to do with trucking'

Al Jazeera, Usaid Siddiqui, 18 Feb 2022

As Canada strengthens its push to disperse so-called "Freedom Convoy" protesters after weeks in the capital Ottawa, trucker Lovepreet Singh Gill says he never had an interest in participating. While the convoy was billed as a response to mandatory vaccinations for truck drivers crossing the border with the United States, Gill says there are "major issues" in the trucking industry, such as unpaid wages and exploitation of foreign workers, that warrant more attention.

Canada protests: Ottawa stand-off continues as blockades cleared

BBC, Feb. 18 2022

Truck drivers and their supporters block streets during an anti vaccine mandate protest near the Parliament Buildings on February 15, 2022 in Ottawa, Ontario, Canada. Police in Canada's capital are telling protesters to "leave the area now" as the demonstration against Covid restrictions continues. Hundreds remain in Ottawa in defiance of the newly deployed Emergencies Act.

Canadian police arrest at least 100 protesters in bid to break up Ottawa truck blockade

The Guardian (UK Edition), Leyland Cecco, 19 Feb 2022

At least 21 vehicles towed as police start breaking up protest camp that has paralysed Canada's capital for several weeks. Police in Ottawa have begun arresting protesters and towing away vehicles in an effort to break up the so-called "freedom convoy" that has paralysed Canada's capital for weeks and prompted the prime minister, Justin Trudeau, to declare a national emergency

Trucker "Freedom" Protests Prove Canada Is Just as Screwed as the U.S.

Vanity Fair, SAVANNAH WALSH, FEBRUARY 18, 2022

Daily Show correspondent Jordan Klepper questioned protesters of Canada's vaccine mandate in Ottawa, where American imports like QAnon are on full display.

The 'Freedom Convoy' is ending, but issues 'not going away'

Al Jazeera, February 19 2022

Disinformation expert Carmen Celestini speaks to Al Jazeera about border blockades, siege that paralysed Canada; saying the convoy is the culmination of the growth during the COVID-19 pandemic of online communities rife with conspiracy theories, misinformation and disinformation.

Canada. À Ottawa, la bravade des camionneurs contre les mesures d'urgence

Le Courrier International, 17 février 2022

Malgré l'entrée en vigueur de la loi sur les mesures d'urgence décidée par Justin Trudeau, les routiers refusent toujours de lever leur blocus dans la capitale fédérale canadienne, rapporte Le Devoir.

Manifestations contre les mesures sanitaires à Ottawa : une opération de police inédite pour déloger les camionneurs

Le Monde, Hélène Jouan (Montréal, correspondance), 19 février 2022

Un millier d'agents ont été déployés vendredi dans la capitale canadienne et une centaine de manifestants ont été interpellés.

Au Canada, une partie des rues d'Ottawa évacuée, plus de 100 arrestations parmi les opposants aux restrictions sanitaires

Le Monde avec AFP, 18 février 2022

Le Parlement canadien a décidé de reprendre ses travaux, samedi. Le mouvement d'opposants aux mesures sanitaires l'avait contraint, la veille, à rester exceptionnellement fermé.

[Convoi de la liberté au Canada : des manifestants menacés de perdre la garde de leurs animaux](#)

RT News (France), 18 février 2022

Les autorités canadiennes ont annoncé que les animaux des manifestants arrêtés par les forces de l'ordre seraient placés sous protection, à leur frais pendant huit jours, puis considérés comme abandonnés si personne ne venait s'en occuper.

Canada : la police évacue les derniers anti-passe sanitaire à Ottawa

FRANCE 24, 19 février 2022

Les forces de l'ordre ont annoncé, vendredi, avoir interpellé plus de 100 personnes dans les rues de la capitale fédérale, théâtre depuis trois semaines d'un important mouvement de contestation contre les mesures sanitaires du gouvernement de Justin Trudeau.

U.S. Congress asks Facebook: What role did fake overseas accounts have in promoting Canada convoys?

Lawmakers demanded answers in letter that mentions Russia. Facebook says it will co-operate.

Alexander Panetta · CBC News · Posted: Feb 18, 2022 5:58 PM ET | Last Updated: February 18

What's new

American politicians are demanding details from Facebook about how many fake online accounts created by foreign actors helped promote Canada's convoy protests.

The chair of the most powerful investigative body in the U.S. House of Representatives this week sent a letter to company founder Mark Zuckerberg seeking information about inauthentic activity.

New York Democrat Carolyn Maloney asked Zuckerberg nine questions about the extent to which fake accounts from abroad helped organizers spread the word.

The questions include, how many fake accounts Facebook identified related to the "Freedom Convoy"; when it determined they were fake; how many people saw that content; what country it originated from; what countries it was spread in; and how much money Facebook made from associated ads.

What's the context

The letter expressed alarm over reports that Facebook had discovered that some groups promoting the convoys had been created by fake user profiles, which were set up in content farms in Vietnam, Bangladesh and Romania.

She identified Russia as having in the past used fake social-media profiles to spread content that polarized Americans, a practice described in one chapter of the Mueller report into 2016 U.S. election interference.

"These reports are particularly alarming given Facebook's history of amplifying toxic content, extremism, and disinformation, including from Russia and other foreign actors," Maloney, chair of the House Oversight and Reform committee, wrote in the letter dated Feb. 14.

"Utilizing fake, stolen, or inauthentic accounts has become a common technique by those promoting disinformation campaigns and social engineering efforts, particularly foreign entities.

"Russia operated Facebook accounts and pages to interfere with the 2016 U.S. presidential election, including using stolen identities of Americans. These Russian-operated accounts and pages had their content shared hundreds of millions of times leading up to the election."

A former official in the State Department and Department of Defence under George W. Bush, Kristofer Harrison, said in an interview that Russia uses dummy profiles to promote all sorts of polarizing content across the political spectrum, from Black Lives Matter and defunding the police to white supremacists and yellow-vest protests.

"They just want the loudest mess possible," said Harrison, a Russia analyst.

What's next

There is no evidence of Russian involvement in Canada. Or of any state actor being involved in promoting the convoy protests, which ultimately received record-smashing donations from thousands of real people, primarily in Canada and the U.S.

Facebook told NBC News earlier this month that it had deleted some pro-convoy groups run by overseas actors. They did not say how many and from where.

Convoy protest received hundreds of donations that appeared to be from abroad

Convoy protest could change the way money is monitored, says watchdog agency

We could know more if Facebook responds to the questions from U.S. congressional Democrats, and both sides expressed hope of co-operation.

The committee is confident that Facebook will provide the information, said one Washington source. Facebook, meanwhile, confirmed to CBC News that it had received the letter and would respond in writing.

The social-media giant said it also looked forward to meeting with committee staff to answer their questions and provide updates on the issue.

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/world/congress-convoy-facebook-1.6357381?fbclid=IwAR2NosNi14K13ucvQF4nP1yi9dmlNbVNzp6GxKQbd7SX6vCdJQo2stvsfOs>

Marc-André Pharand

Analyste des politiques | Policy Analyst

Direction des relations avec les États-Unis | United States Relations Division

Bureau de la stratégie pour l'Amérique du Nord | North American Strategy Bureau

marc-andre.pharand@international.gc.ca

Cell: 343-549-4061

